

252 cooking stones; it makes a greenish cake, or 'bread' as the
 262 Lepchas call it, of an astonishingly leathery consistency. On
 264 ordinary days, besides snacks, the Lepchas eat two meals; the bigger
 one in the morning, drunk with tea, Tibetan fashion, before
 ● [272] going to work; and a second meal in the evenings with *chi* to
 accompany it.

273 Millet is grown exclusively for fermenting for *chi* and is never
 eaten by human beings; if there is no millet any other grain
 will be fermented in the same way; if there is no grain bootleg
 liquor is made out of the pith of different tree-ferns, which is
 pounded and buried. The making of this alcohol from forest produce
 is formally forbidden but is done almost continuously; it is very
 strong and potentially poisonous, and has a strong purgative
 effect. This alcohol is under the protection of a supernatural called
 Manoong *moong* and when the fermented pith is pounded on a piece
 of wood offerings of sticks placed on the press are made to the
 supernatural, who will make the drink stronger or weaker according
 to the size of his offerings.

Chi can be prepared in about nine days, but it is stronger and
 more appreciated if it is left to ferment longer. Specially strong
 [846] *chi* is always prepared against a woman's lying-in and is given
 to her as a strengthening food for a month after delivery. To
 prepare *chi* the grain is first trodden to separate it from the husks
 and then put in a basket and well washed in a stream. A copper
 [415] vessel is also well washed and the grain put in it; it is then covered
 with cold water and boiled until all the water is absorbed, being
 stirred all the time with a wooden spoon. To make sure that all
 the water is absorbed the wooden spoon is stuck down to the bottom
 of the pot; if it comes up dripping further cooking is necessary.
 When it has cooked sufficiently the pot is upset on to a bamboo
 mat; after an hour it is removed and the cooked grain is spread all
 over the mat. Then a big wicker basket is well lined with bracken;
 the grain is mixed with powdered yeast and put into the basket
 which is covered with more bracken and a tightly tied cloth. The
 basket is then set in a corner, well away from the fire, for two or
 three days, at the end of which time the smell of fermentation
 becomes noticeable. Then special big leaves are fetched from the
 forest and a new basket is lined with them and the grain is trans-
 ferred to the new basket, which is well tied up and set over the fire
 on the drying ledge. It is fit to drink after three days but it is
 better kept longer; it becomes undrinkable after four months.